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Alternative History

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in: [Byzantine Empire](#), [Differently](#), [Nations \(Differently\)](#), [Byzantium \(Differently\)](#)

Byzantium (Differently)

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Byzantium, officially the **Kingdom of Byzantium** (Greek: βασιλεία τοῦ Βυζαντίου) and sometimes referred to as the **Eastern Roman Kingdom**, is a country in Southeast Europe. It borders [Montenegro](#), [Serbia](#) and [Bulgaria](#) to the north and [West Persia](#) and [Syria](#) to the east and is bounded by the Mediterranean Sea on the south, the Adriatic Sea on the west and the Black Sea on the northeast. The modern reminiscent of the old [Roman Empire](#), Byzantium was historically one of the most powerful and educated nations in the world. Its plenty of historical sights, including decorated churches such as the [Hagia Sophia](#), makes tourism its main economic activity. Byzantium is considered the cultural bridge between Asia and Europe. The modern state of Byzantium dates back to 1805, when the [Republic of Byzantium](#) was abolished and the current kingdom was established.

With a population of over 57 million inhabitants, Byzantium is Europe's [sixth-most populous country](#), ranking [30th in the entire world](#). Its surface area of 452 square kilometers makes it the [fourth-largest nation in Europe](#) and the [57th-largest in the entire world](#).

Byzantium's capital and largest city is Constantinople. Other important cities include Athens, Smyrna, Thessaloniki and Heraklion.

Kingdom of Byzantium

βασιλεία τοῦ Βυζαντίου

Timeline: [Differently](#)

OTL equivalent: [Greece](#), [Albania](#), [North Macedonia](#), [outer regions of Turkey](#), [Cyprus](#)



Flag

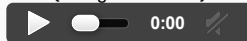
Coat of arms

Motto:
Ελευθερία
"Freedom"

Anthem:
"Θά 'ρθεις σαν αστραπή"
"*Thá 'rtheis san astrapi*"
(National anthem)



"Κύριε ἐλέησον"
"*Kyrie eleison*"
(Liturgical anthem)



Location of Byzantium (green)

Capital
(and largest city)

Constantinople

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Name

The country's modern name is a Romanized form of Byzantion, an old name for Constantinople. During most of the **imperial time**, Byzantines referred to themselves as Romans and to their realm as the Roman Empire. From the 16th century on, the name "Byzantium" began to be used to refer to the whole nation, and became gradually popular. In the early 19th century, the **Republic** was the first polity to officially call itself Byzantium. After the **Varangian Rebellion** in 1805, the Kingdom, which sought a compromise between the old tradition and the revolutionary tide, went on with the name Byzantium. Currently, the adjective "Roman" is seldom used to refer to Byzantium as it was centuries ago, except in poetic or ideological contexts.

History

Early years of the Empire (395–1200)

In the late 4th century, following the death of Theodosius I, the Roman Empire was divided between the Western and Eastern Empires, with its respective capitals in the Italian Peninsula and in Constantinople. About eighty years later, the Western Roman Empire fell due to a number of factors, including invasions by barbarians. The Eastern Roman Empire, however, endured and gradually developed its own identity based on Greek culture and Orthodox Christianity, while still retaining Roman traditions. While the nationals referred to themselves as Romans, the realm would become known, many centuries later, as the **Byzantine Empire**.

Throughout its existence Byzantium would face cycles of glory, decline and recovery. By 600 AD, the empire ruled over most of the Mediterranean coast that once belonged to the Romans, including Rome itself. 43 years later, Byzantium lost **Egypt** and **Syria**, its richest provinces, to legions of well-armed separatists. It kept losing more territory than it gained and by 1200 it reached its approximate current shape, comprising the southern Balkans and the coast of Asia Minor.

Glory years (1200–1600)

Byzantium recovered its former economical glory under the Komnenid dynasty and by the 12th century, Constantinople was the largest and wealthiest city in Europe. Under the

following Angelid dynasty, the empire resisted several attempts of invasion by the Crusaders during the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) and managed to successfully preserve its hegemony and the unity of its territory.

By the mid-14th century, Byzantium was invaded by neighboring Zoroastrian Turkic states, marking the beginning of [conflicts between Zoroastrian and European nations](#), which lasted until 1502, when those Turkic nations were conquered by the Sassanid Empire, whose emperor supported peace with Europe in favor of national unity and stability. However, unaware of this and still expecting to lose, the Byzantine military put more fortifications into Peloponnese, which protected them from further invasions that came later.

Instability (1600–1805)

For the following two and a half centuries, Byzantium, albeit weakened, remained a relatively stable and prosperous nation with influence spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean and the Australian continent. By the 1760s, however, the country plunged into an era of internal political conflicts, with many supporting the abolition of the position of Emperor. This culminated with the [Byzantine colonies in Australia](#) revolting in 1790 and then the people on the mainland revolting in 1797 leading to a civil war, in which several political opponents fought. The war ended in 1801 with a [provisional republican government](#) in power.

Albeit initially popular, the new government started with an increasingly unstable economy caused by the recent war, generating dissatisfaction across the nation. During an unemployment crisis in 1805, the indirectly-elected president was assassinated, prompting a national revolt in which the monarchy was restored under a democratic constitution. The country was renamed from "empire" to "kingdom" and the monarch's powers were severely limited. The monarch lost his ability to dissolve the [Senate](#) and appoint ministers, although he still had considerable command over the armed forces. The new state adopted the current flag, coat of arms and anthem of Byzantium as official national symbols. It was also the second state to adopt the name Byzantium *officially* after the republic (the empire was called only "Roman Empire").

Modern times (1805–present)

By 1820, the country had fully recovered from its economic crisis and started a process of modernization and better relations with Western European and international powers. Over the 19th century, the kingdom became an important economic partner and diplomatic ally of [Italy](#), [Germany](#), [Britain](#), [France](#) and even distant countries such as the [United States](#), [Brazil](#) and [China](#).

In the late 19th century, tourism was already Byzantium's main economic activity, which contributed to an economic boom in the 1890s. In 1896, the Byzantine city of Athens inaugurated the first modern [Olympic Games](#), giving even more prestige to the nation.

During the 1900s, Byzantium's relations with Britain and France began to deteriorate due to its support of the rival nations of Germany, [Austria-Hungary](#) and Italy. By the early 1910s, Europe was divided between this coalition, called the Quadruple Entente, and the Allied coalition formed by France, Britain and Russia. There was severe opposition among the people to Byzantium remaining in the alliance, but politicians who wanted to preserve the country's hegemony managed to maintain its position. The diplomatic tensions culminated in the [Great War](#), which lasted four years from 1914 until the defeat of the Entente in 1918. Among the Entente nations, Byzantium was the one that suffered the most with the defeat. The country lost many lives and had several settlements decimated by the war, besides entering another era of unemployment and darkness. This economic depression resulted in Turks of Anatolia revolting in 1919, leading to the [Turkic Revolution](#), which persisted until it was crushed by 1924. With the Turkic rebels seizing farmlands during the revolution, a famine and economic collapse spread through the country, inspiring nations from all around the world to send humanitarian aid.

While the economy would bounce back due to the economic reforms of Prime Minister Maxentius Lecapenas, the war had scarred a generation of Byzantine youth. Byzantium

participated in the [Cold War](#) against the [Soviet Union](#), being the only country in Eastern Europe to join the First World. In the early post Cold War years, Byzantium alongside West Persia was attacked by [Armenia](#) in the late 1970s for control of the Armenian-populated regions of Anatolia, resulting in the resurgence of anti-Armenian discrimination on the part of the government. Since its economic recovery and victory against Armenia in 1980, Byzantium has re-emerged as an economic and military power in the east Mediterranean region.

On August 10th, 2022, Byzantium would formally join the newly formed [European Union](#) as a founding member, emerging as one of the dominant economic powers within the Union.

Ethnic groups

Main article: [Ethnic groups of Byzantium \(Differently\)](#)

Although Rhomaioi are by far the largest ethnicity in Byzantium, comprising about 70% of the country's population, numerous other groups also have a significant presence, including Turks, Egyptians, Romaniote Jews, Aromanians, Afro-Byzantines and Anatolians.

Politics

Branches of government

Byzantium is a federal democratic state under a parliamentary constitutional monarchy. The [King](#) of Byzantium, currently Constantine XVI, embodies the nation's unity and sovereignty and exercises limited reserve powers as the Head of State. The [Byzantine Senate](#), the unicameral legislature, passes laws in the kingdom and elects the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister, currently Athena Palaeologa, acts as the chief diplomat and as the head of government for the kingdom. The Prime Minister also acts as a representative for their party due to their position as the party leader. Prior to the creation of political parties in the mid 1800s, the Prime Minister was elected by "cliques", which were loose alliances of non-partisan senators.

Coronation portrait of Constantine XVI. Constantine XVI has been the king of Byzantium since his father's abdication in 2021.

Military

The Royal Byzantine Military (Βασιλικός Βυζαντιός Σταρτος) is headed by the Royal Board of National Defense. It consists of seven branches:

- The [Royal Byzantine Army](#) (Ο Βασιλικός Βυζαντιός Σταρτος)
- The [Royal Byzantine Air Force](#) (Η Βασιλική βυζαντινή Αεροπορία)
- The [Royal Byzantine Navy](#) (Το Βασιλικό βυζαντινό Ναυτικό)
- The [Royal Byzantine Marine Corps](#) (Το Βασιλικό Βυζαντινό Σώμα Πεζοναυτών)
- The [Royal Byzantine Coast Guard](#) (Η Βασιλική Βυζαντινή Ακτοφυλακή)
- The [Royal Byzantine Space Force](#) (Η Βασιλική Βυζαντινή Διαστημική Δύναμη)
- The [Royal Byzantine Police Force](#) (Η Βασιλική Βυζαντινή Αστυνομία)

Flag of the Byzantine Military.

Themes

The **themes** or ***thémata*** (Greek: θέματα, *thémata*, singular: θέμα, *théma*) act as administrative subdivisions for the Kingdom of Byzantium. Themes are often broken down on political, culture, geographic, or ethnic lines. The largest theme is the theme of Constantinople which encompasses much all of the massive city and surrounding neighborhoods.

The themes elect their own governors and each theme is given Senators based on how many people live there. For example, the theme of Dyrrhachium is represented by 12 Senators due to its large population. In contrast, the theme of Monemvasia only has 2 senators as representation due to its smaller population.

There are currently 26 themes, with the newest theme being the Turkic Theme created in 1922.

Themes sorted by population

Theme	Capital	Population	Governor
Constantinople	Constantinople	15,102,031	Auxentius Acominatus
Smyrna	Smyrna	10,304,199	Yianni Stratioticus
Anatolikon	Amorium	6,800,392	Justinian Tzimiskes
Hellas (Greece)	Lamia	5,102,402	Ioannis Pagonides
Arvanon	Dyrrhachion	5,075,210	Euphrasia Bourbolis
Athens	Athens	3,090,508	Kostas Bakoyannis
Ospikon	Agios Nikolaos	2,520,031	Dionysios Kontas
Peloponnese	Sparta	2,028,031	Zeno Akropolites
Turkic Theme	Mergen	2,000,132	Eftichis Kormoglou
Nikopolis	Patras	1,300,472	Aurelia Meloda
Cyprus	Nicosia	1,292,103	Nicos Anastasiades
Crete	Heraklion	634,930	Athena Cosmalli
Thrace	Hadrianopolis	410,031	Sebastianus Botaniates
Optimaton	Nicomedia	337,963	Thodoris Pateridis
Thessaloniki	Thessaloniki	315,196	Yiannis Boutaris
Paphlagonia	Gangra	257,324	Marieta Georgiade
Abydos	Granicus	240,229	Venantius Lascaris
Kibryaioton	Attaleia	230,139	Anthimos Stamatidis
Strymon	Alexandroupoli	201,859	Maria Kurkua
Scupi	Scupi	192,145	Yiannis Papadopoulos
Euboea	Chalcis	191,206	Eleni Vaka
Cilicia	Adana	164,583	Evengelia Tassakou
Rhodes	Rhodes	115,490	Manolis Petrellis
Armeniakon	Amaseia	108,291	Maximianus Maniakes
Corfu	Kastropolis	102,071	Maurinus Palamas
Corinthia	Corinth	38,132	Ermioni Anagna
Monemvasia	Monemvasia	21,942	Olga Zografiadi

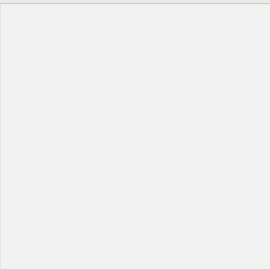
Political parties

Culture

Sports

Athens hosted the inaugural 1896 Olympic Games and the entire country hosted the 1995 FIFA World Cup, which its national team won.

There are stadiums with a capacity over 10,000 throughout Byzantium, including Olympic stadiums in Olympia, Athens, Smyrna, and Constantinople. Aside from the 1896 games, Byzantium would also host the



2004 Olympic Games.

Constantinople National Stadium

Due to being the birthplace of the Olympics, it is tradition in Olympic Game opening ceremonies for Byzantium's delegation to be called in first and this tradition has continued ever since the re-establishment of the Olympic games in 1896.

There are also many famous Byzantine athletes who have gained international fame such as basketball player Giannis Antetokounmpo who played in a lot of local Byzantine basketball leagues before making into into the United States' NBA and becoming famous in the United and Confederate States.

Giannis Antetokounmpo, a Byzantine basketball player of Nigerian origin, is one of the most famous basketball players in the NBA currently.

Byzantium also hosts the annual Formula One race at Constantinople Park. Max Verstappen has won the most Byzantine Grands Prix with 5 while Red Bull have won the most with 6 Grand Prix wins at Byzantium.

Music

Throughout the 20th and 21st Century, music has become one of Byzantium's biggest cultural exports. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Thessaloniki developed a very large music scene which lead to the rise of many famous Byzantine singers such as the Andreas Sisters, who became some of the most iconic singers of the 20th century and in Byzantine history, leading to the development of a stylization of Big Band music known as [Mediterranean Big Band](#).

Felipe Massa at the 2009 Byzantine Grand Prix

Throughout the 1950s, Thessaloniki's music scene would be shaken up when several singers hailing from the city of Nafplio known as the "Nafplio Pack" would dominate the nightclubs of Thessaloniki. Their blend of traditional Greek instruments such as the bouzouki with a jazzy rhythm would encapsulate audiences and draw more musical tourism from around the world to Thessaloniki to see their performances.

The Andreas Sisters are the most famous musical trio to come out of Byzantium with their music spreading across international markets in the 1930s and 1940s.

In the modern day, there are many famous singers and musicians who have come out of the Byzantine Empire such as Dua Lipa, Rita Ora, and Yianni Salellis who are well known around the world and have regularly broken U.S., European, and East Asian music charts.

Film and media

There have been many famous Byzantine film directors and movies that have come out over the years. One of the most famous Byzantine films is the 1964 film [Zorba the Greek](#) directed by Michalis Cacoyannis. It won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1964 and shattered Box Office records in theaters across Byzantium, the United Kingdom, France, the United States, and the Confederate States. The soundtrack from Zorba the Greek is also iconic and the song *Sirtaki* is one of the most famous Byzantine folk songs.

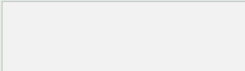
Notable film directors from Byzantium include the aforementioned Michalis Cacoyannis as well as Giannis Dalianidis, Daphne Matziaraki, and Lucia Rikaki.

Literature

Throughout the 20th century and 21st century, there have been a lot of books written about Byzantium and life in Byzantium.

Education

Byzantium is well known for the Byzantine Academy of Arts & Sciences in Constantinople. Originally founded in 425 as a



university it became an all boys boarding school in 1046. Girls were not allowed to attend until 1863. Non-Rhomaioi people were not allowed to attend until 1924. However between 1976 and 1980, Armenians were not allowed to attend the school. It is part of the "Holy Trinity of Secondary Education" alongside Phillips Exeter Academy in the United States and the School of Practical Learning in Peking, China. The school is also called the "Birthplace of Byzantine Politics" due to the fact that nearly every king since Leo I has attended the academy. 12 out of the 20 Byzantine Prime Ministers have also attended, among other notable alumni.

The Main Academy, built in 1204, it is the oldest active educational building in the world

Differently (V • E)

Main (includes timeline and maps) • Historical maps

List of nations (detailed • by population • by area • by density • by form of government • by formation) • List of monarchs (Claimants) • Wars

Miscellaneous: RMS *Titanic* • Olympic Games • Time Person of the Year • FIFA World Cup • Kennedy family • List of the Academy Awards for Best Picture • Adolf Hitler (Teedish language) • World Trade Center • Languages • Religion • Business and industry • Vinlanders • League of Nations • *Shrek!*

Meta: Help with templates • Discord server • Changing territory





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